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ATEC UPDATE

Recognition Program Helps Businesses Develop a Competitive Edge

In today's marketplace, businesses must develop an edge on the competition. Training their staff to provide outstanding customer service is one way in which they can develop this edge.

But to truly surpass the competition, businesses must let *their customers know* that they have made a commitment to providing this level of service. ATEC's new *Serving You Our Best!* Business Recognition Program helps businesses market their commitment to service excellence.

Since the program's inception, ATEC has undertaken several new and exciting marketing initiatives, from which partner businesses registered in the program have benefitted.

Service Directory

A new directory of *Serving You Our Best!* partners, "Quick Tips for Great Service," was released at the end of July.

The directory provides an outstanding opportunity for partner businesses to promote their services. All partners in the program receive a free listing in the directory, and also have the option of purchasing advertising space.

50,000 copies of the directory were distributed across the province.

Serv-us Best! Contest Promotion

At the beginning of September, ATEC launched a new contest promotion called *Serv-us Best!*

All program partners receive a contest display, encouraging their customers to nominate an employee who gave them outstanding service. Draws will be made monthly, and both the person whose name is drawn, as well as the person who nominated them, will receive prizes.

(see "*Serving You Our Best!*" - pg. 2)



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ATEC About to Become a Not-for-Profit Corporation

Within the next few weeks, ATEC will become a not-for-profit corporation under federal law, replacing its current status as a crown agency attached to the Department of Economic Development and Tourism. Once this occurs, ATEC will operate and be governed by Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, and will no longer operate according to legislation (the Tourism Education Council Act of 1988). The new corporation will be governed by a Board of Directors elected and appointed by industry member groups, rather than by a Council appointed by the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

ATEC's privatization will not only

change the way the organization is structured, but will also lead to more autonomy and a distinct private sector orientation. The government will continue to be a very supportive partner of ATEC's activities in many ways, even though direct funding in the form of grants will be eliminated as of April 1, 1996.

For you, our customers, the change to a privatized ATEC will mean continued positive change in the way we do business, as we become reliant on offering training programs and services that are saleable, accessible, and make an impact on your tourism, hospitality, or service sector businesses.

Industry and Educators - Plan to Attend Workshop on Partnerships!

On November 5 and 6, ATEC will be hosting the First Annual Professional Development Workshop for Tourism/Service Industry Professionals and Educators.

The Workshop will focus on

developing partnerships between industry and educators, and will also offer informative, interactive sessions that will provide participants with fresh ideas and practical skills.

For more information contact Jolanda at 422-0781.



"Serving You Our Best!" (cont'd from pg. 1)

Television Advertising



Thanks to the support of ITV in Edmonton, ATEC was able to launch a very successful television advertising campaign in mid-July.

Some of the 225 advertising spots were used by ATEC to encourage customers to look for businesses that display the *Serving You Our Best!* door decal, while the remainder were made available to businesses who are registered in the program.

Businesses were able to purchase the spots at reduced rates, making the power of television advertising available to businesses who might not otherwise be able to afford it.

Alberta Road Map

ALBERTA BEST will be featured in the 1996 Alberta Road Map. *Serving You Our Best!* partner businesses will

have an opportunity to advertise their businesses in this high profile piece.

Accommodation/Campground Guides

Hotels and motels benefit from the program by receiving special designation in the Accommodation and Campground guides.

Helping Businesses Succeed

These initiatives are all designed to assist businesses in developing a competitive advantage by helping them to promote their commitment to their customers. The program is available to businesses who have trained 60% of their staff in ALBERTA BEST and/or certified 20% of their staff in eligible occupations.

Anyone who is interested in registering in the program can contact ATEC at 422-0781 in Edmonton, 297-7186 in Calgary, or toll-free in Alberta at 1-800-265-1283.

New Face Behind ATEC's Sales & Marketing Force

We are both happy and sad to report that Donna Waldorf will no longer be leading ATEC's Sales & Marketing team - happy for Donna because she has taken an exciting new position as Marketing Manager at the Calgary Zoo, but sad to have lost such a dynamic and competent member of our staff.

However, we are pleased to announce the arrival of Garry Jones as the new Manager of Sales & Marketing.

Garry has extensive experience and a strong record of achievement in marketing and sales management, as well as a solid background in the tourism and hospitality industry. Garry spent thirteen years working with the Westin Hotels in both Edmonton and Calgary, where he held numerous sales and marketing related positions, including Director of Sales & Marketing. Garry also coordinated the marketing activities of the Northern Alberta Dairy Pool (Nu-Maid), and most recently he held the position of Account Executive with Pocklington Sports Marketing.

Welcome aboard, Garry!

RUBES®

By Leigh Rubin



"Even if you're on the right track - you'll get run over if you just sit there."

- Arthur Godfrey

Bits & Bites

- ♦ various versions of ALBERTA BEST seminar manuals are now available, including:
 - ♦ healthcare version
 - ♦ public sector version
 - ♦ police/security services version
 - ♦ new version with "Selling is Service" module
 - ♦ original version with "Tourism Ambassadors" module
- ♦ Lethbridge Community College recently introduced a **new program in Resort Spa Operations**. This is a one-year certificate program, designed to give students not only career training in the resort spa field, but also an entry-level employment opportunity. Students take two terms of course work, then engage in a two-month work experience at a resort hotel in Western Canada. For further information, contact:

Lethbridge Community College
Admissions Office
3000 College Drive South
Lethbridge, AB T1K 1L6
Phone: (403) 382-6951
- ♦ **Brent Ritchie**, ATEC Council member and chair of the University of Calgary's World Tourism Education and Research Centre has proven himself to be in a class of his own. Brent recently became the fourth recipient of the Travel & Tourism Research Association's (TTRA) Achievement Award. The award was presented to him at the TTRA's annual convention in Mexico.

Canadian Tourism Commission Chairman to Speak in Calgary

Judd Buchanan, the Chairman of the new Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC), will be speaking at a luncheon hosted by the Calgary Convention and Visitors Bureau (CCVB).

Mr. Buchanan will be speaking about the role and vision of the CTC, why it was set up, how it will differ from Tourism Canada, and what it will mean to Albertans, Calgarians, and CCVB members. A question and answer period will be held following the presentation.

ALBERTA BEST Expands Interest in New SERVICE BEST Program High

For the past five years ALBERTA BEST has been a highly effective customer service training program for Alberta businesses. Because of this success, and in response to inquiries from outside Alberta, a revised version of the program is now available to businesses outside Alberta under the name SERVICE BEST.

The revisions involved the creation of a "Selling is Service" module to replace the "Tourism/Ambassadors" module. This module discusses the relationship of selling to service, how to identify the features and benefits of products and services, and various selling techniques.

As of September 1, SERVICE BEST licenses became available to independent trainers wishing to deliver the one-day staff seminars and two-day service management seminars. Candidates apply to be licensed distributors of the program, and successful trainers must attend a 5½-day Train-the-Trainer workshop.

The cost of becoming a SERVICE BEST licensed distributor is \$1500 for those interested in delivering the program in one province or state (other than Alberta), \$2500 for a national license (within any country, including Canada), or \$5000 for an international license. The cost for the Train-the-Trainer workshop is \$2200. Costs include a License Resource Kit, trainer leader's guides and resource

materials. Licensed distributors are required to purchase original materials from ATEC.

Interest in this outstanding opportunity is already high - inquiries have been received from Vancouver, Vancouver Island, Manitoba, and Nebraska, and from as far away as Chile and Trinidad. The first SERVICE BEST national license has been sold to a father and son team from South Africa. They will be attending the Train-the-Trainer workshop on October 1-6.

Anyone interested in becoming a distributor of SERVICE BEST can contact ATEC at 422-0781 (Edmonton), 297-7186 (Calgary), or toll-free at 1-800-265-1283.

This promises to be an exciting expansion of an already successful program!



ALBERTA BEST Seminars

The following ALBERTA BEST seminars have been scheduled for September/October:

September 20/27 (mgmnt seminar)
Edmonton
Call GEVCA at 429-9915

September 22 (staff seminar)
Medicine Hat
Call XEL Training at 529-3835

September 25 (staff seminar)
Brooks
Call XEL Training at 529-3835

September 25/26 (mgmnt seminar)
Brooks
Call XEL Training 529-3835

September 30 (staff seminar)
Wetaskiwin
Call Jean Macdonald at 352-5708

October 4 (staff seminar)
Edmonton
Call GEVCA at 429-9915

The luncheon will be held on September 28 in the Garden Patio Room of the Delta Bow Valley Hotel. The event will begin with a reception at 11:30, followed by lunch from 12:00 to 1:00.

Anyone who is interested in purchasing tickets for the luncheon can contact Leslie Russell at the CCVB at 750-2367.

Tickets are \$30 for CCVB members, and \$35 for non-members.

ATEC Hosts National Meetings

On August 13-16, ATEC hosted tourism human resource representatives from across Canada for three days of meetings.

The Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council (CTHRC) meetings were held to finalize plans for a three-year project to provide standards, certification, and training tools for Canada's tourism industry. ATEC is a founding Board member of the CTHRC, and ATEC personnel and programs are key to the success of the national program.

Over the next three years, ATEC will be coordinating the validation of national occupational standards for the CTHRC. The standards will provide the basis for national

certification for tourism occupations, in which ATEC will again take the lead.

Easy-to-use, on-the-job training tools will also be developed for a variety of occupations.



Participants in the CTHRC meetings represented tourism education councils from across the country.

Alberta Best Goes Scottish!

Word of ATEC's highly successful ALBERTA BEST Customer Service Excellence Seminars is spreading across the globe!

ATEC has recently finalized negotiations to export the program to Scotland.

Scottish Enterprise, Scotland's tourism training agency, has paid a one-time license fee which will allow them to adapt and deliver the program in Scotland.

Scottish Enterprise first heard about the program's success from Don Anderson from the University of Calgary, when he was delivering a presentation at a conference in the United Kingdom. They had been using a program called "Welcome Host," a one-day hospitality awareness seminar, but were looking for a quality program that would deliver more in-depth attitude and customer service skills training.

After a flurry of faxes and presentations, the contract to purchase the program was signed last month.

"The growing interest in ALBERTA BEST around the world is truly a testament to a world class product that was developed right here in Alberta," says Ann Hickmann, Manager of ALBERTA BEST. "Albertans should be very proud."

The new customized version of the

program, to be called "Scotland's Best," is already drawing tremendous interest in that country. Word has it that 3000 staff and managers at Scotland's national historic sites, castles, and other tourism attractions have already committed to taking the program as soon as it is available.



Simple & Inexpensive Ways to Promote Your Commitment to Customer Service

Outstanding customer service gives your business a competitive advantage, especially if you promote this commitment to your customers. The techniques you use don't have to be lavish or expensive -- try some of the following!

- rework your vision or mission statement to include your commitment to service. Display these statements prominently for all to see.
- feature your service commitment (e.g. logo and/or vision) on your prominent business pieces, such as letterhead, business cards, nametags, menus, and invoices.
- offer rewards or discounts for loyal or repeat customers.
- have cameras accessible for clients - have them take pictures of any staff that really make their visit special.
- provide an extra touch to welcome or thank your customers - cookies, promotional items, greeters - something that will make them say, "That's a nice touch!"
- post "employee of the month" photos or names where the customer can see.
- join the *Serving You Our Best!* Business Recognition Program, and place a decal on your door indicating your active commitment to customer service!

Customer Service Tip...

The *Blue Flame*, a newsletter for the Northwest Natural Gas Company in Portland, Oregon, periodically publishes a list of thank you letters and comments from customers highlighting the name of the employee mentioned. The column, entitled "Kudos!", paraphrases both letters and phone conversations with satisfied customers calling to express their gratitude. The column acts as motivator and a reminder to employees that customer satisfaction is extremely important.

